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#### RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

#### I. THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE: OFFICIAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE

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The social scientist castigating himself for the unconscionable application of his research has become a frequent spectacle nowadays, and the anthropologist has been perhaps the most enthusiastic self-flagellant (cf. Talal Asad, ed., Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter; Dell Hymes, ed., Reinventing Anthropology; and in general, the columns of the New York Review of Books). My own project is designed to question the received opinions about the relationship of anthropology and British colonialism during the inter-war period. This involves separating two questions which are usually treated as one: the effect of Colonial Office influence on the development of academic anthropology; and the use of anthropological research by colonial governments. This separation is impossible unless one avoids the mistake common to much intellectual history: the tendency to ignore the actual content of ideas under study, and to presume that the proximity of bodies implies intellectual exchange between them.

Many have argued that the coincidence of the dominance of functionalism in anthropology and Indirect Rule in administration is more than accidental. Malinowski indeed endorsed Indirect Rule and undertook an intensive campaign to convince colonial officials of the relevance of his work to theirs. The International African Institute, which embodied Malinowski's position, did in fact assume an important advisory role for the Colonial Office. By no later than 1929, the permanent staff of the Colonial Office consulted Malinowski in outlining a training program for future colonial civil servants which stressed "the value and efficiency of customs and ideas rather than their history." Malinowski in fact made the C. O. an ally in his battle for academic power; it repudiated the sort of work he deplored--historical evolutionary research.